

THE
Delphick Oracle ;

Set forth by the most LEARNED

SCHOLARS

In the most FAMOUS

UNIVERSITIES of EUROPE:

FOR THE

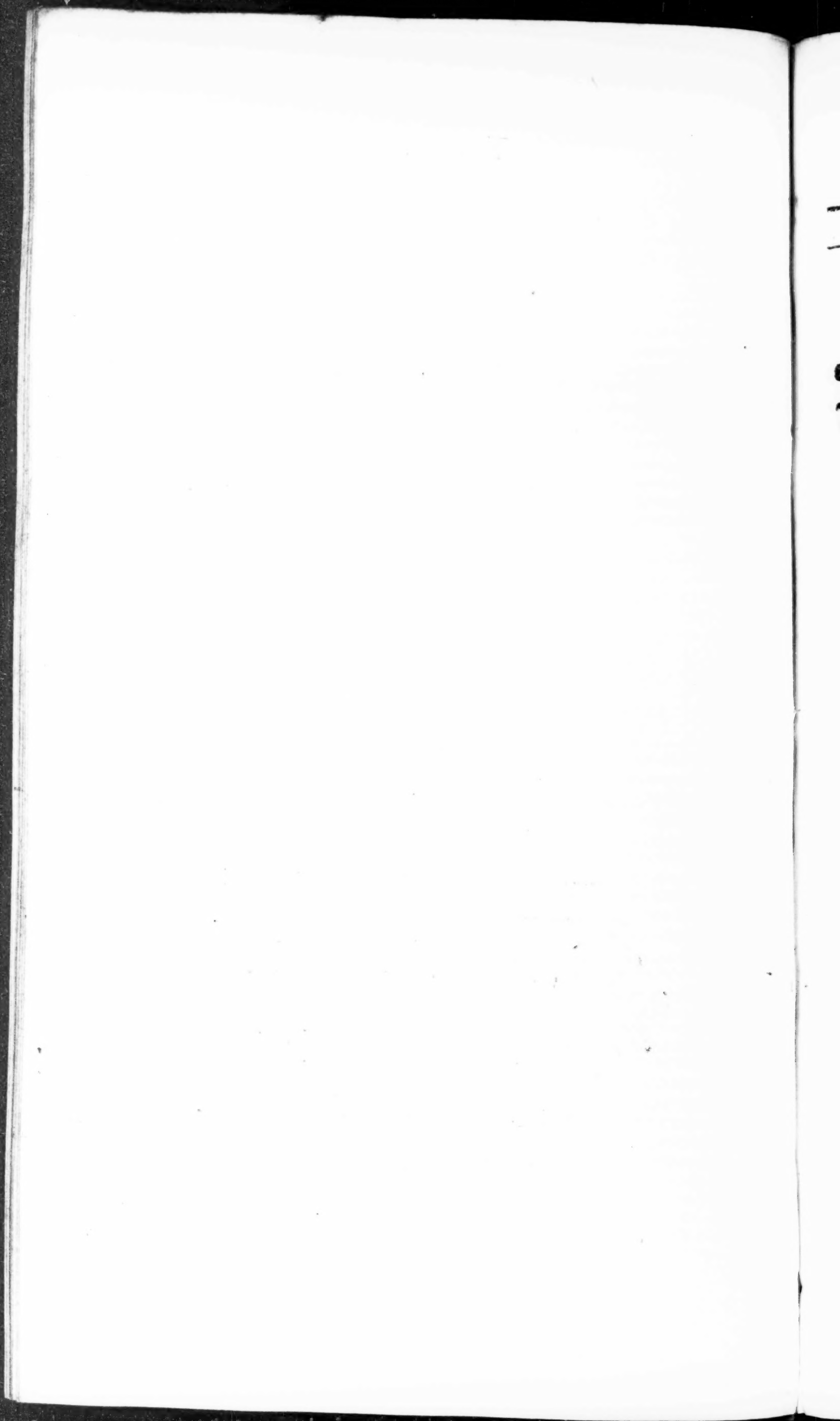
Advancement of *Divine* and
Human LEARNING.

For the MONTH of *December*, 1719.



L O N D O N:

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T H E

Delphick Oracle.

L O N D O N, *December 3d,* 1719

Question. **G**ENTLEMEN of the Society of the Delphick Oracle, you know, our blessed Saviour says, in St. Matthew's Gospel, All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men: But the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto Men, neither in this World, neither in the World to come. Chap. xii. ver. 31, 32. I desire to be inform'd, what is meant here by this unpardonable Sin, and who are the Persons that may be said to be guilty of it? Again, it is said in the 4th Article of the Apostles Creed, that Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate, dead and buried, and descended into Hell, upon which it was the Opinion of the Antients, that he locally descended thither, to triumph over the Devil and his Angels: If so, pray what is the Meaning of these Words of our Saviour to the Thief on the Cross, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise Luke. xxiii. 43?

Answer.

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Answer. **S**OME learned Men have made Presumption, others, Despair to be the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost ; which last, by a Decollation of all Hope, annihilates the Mercy of God. But 'tis our Opinion that neither of these Sins can be comprehended under the Denomination of the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, because it is not to be perpetrated since the Death of our Saviour. *Blasphemia* in *Beza's Latin Translation* of the *New Testament*, is render'd *Convitium* in the *Latin Translation* of *Termellius*, and *Syriac Version* of *Trostius*, which may be interpreted, to speak ill and scandalously of Mankind, as well as impiously and most contumeliously of the Almighty ; but what we properly take to be Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and so not to be forgiven in this World, or in the World to come, was only committed by the *Jews*, when *Christ* was living upon Earth ; 'tis they only who were guilty of this sort of Blasphemy, which is unpardonable both in this Life, and hereafter ; in not believing the Doctrine, holy Life, and most unparallel'd Miracles, which were preach'd and shew'd them by the Son of God, in his own Person of Humanity mixt with a divine Nature ; and then for his Kindness of giving them Instructions to obtain eternal Happiness, to be so barbarous, cruel, and inhuman, as to despitefully use, scourge, mock, and crucify the Redeemer of the World, most ignominiously, betwixt two Malefactors. Such Actions (we think) was the Commission of such Blasphemy, which must be unpardonable for ever, when the Lord of Life himself, according to the Text, pronounc'd the irreversible Sentence.

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Now we come to the second Question, about our Saviour's descending into Hell, after his Passion under *Pontius Pilate*, the Roman President of *Judea*, which seems to be a Contradiction to this Promise of his to the Thief on the Cross, *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*. But as the *Latins*, by *Infernus*, the *Greeks* by *Hades*, and the *Hebrews* by *Sheol*, signify only the Grave, or any other Place under the Earth, *descendere ad inferos* cannot properly be understood that the Soul of our blessed Saviour was absolutely in such a local Place where the Damn'd reside, and is call'd Hell, the Power of which and Death he overcome by his Resurrection. Indeed *Hades* is to be doubly taken, a Place of Joy for the Good, and a Place of Torment for the Bad; the common Name to both is the aforesaid Word, which signifies a Place unknown. The Antient *Heathens* made *Hades* to have two Parts; *Leominas*, that is, flourishing Places for the Godly; and *Tartarus* a Jail for the Wicked; so all good and bad Souls may be said to be in *Hades*, which, to the Holy, is Heaven, to the other Hell. *Leonidas*, King of *Sparta*, when with few Hundreds he fought against very many Thousands of the *Persians*, he encourag'd his Soldiers thus: Fight with a valiant Courage, O *Lacedemonians*, we shall sup in *Hades*. This he made the Whetstone of Valour, that he who dies for his Country, should have a sure Place in Heaven: And that all Souls go to *Hades*, all *Greeks* have held the Opinion from the Days of *Homer*. And after that God had, by the *Macedonians*, convey'd the Greek Tongue to the *Indians*, 'tis said, that those Infidels too believ'd of *Hades* as the *Grecians* did. The just Man's Soul, when he dies, returns to *Hades*, to God only wise and good, to an unseen and pure Place; so that it may be
said

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said *permeare*, to pass unto, not to go down; but as the Situation of the Place may infer Inferiority; the Scripture never taught, that any holy Soul went hence to any other Place, than to Heaven; so are Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven, Mat. viii. 11. So are all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, Luke xiii. 28. And so the Thief upon the Cross, knowing that Christ should go hence to his Kingdom, and that Pity and Compassion would be shew'd him by our Saviour, he promis'd, that he should also go that Day to *Paradise*. And St. Paul expressly tells us, in the 11th Chapter to the *Hebrews*, That *Abraham* was here a Stranger, and look'd for an heavenly City, and God prepar'd it; tho' in Form of Doctrine he was not perfected, having but the Promise of Christ to come; yet he saw him by Faith, as we by History; and by that Faith went hence to Heaven. Moreover, the same Apostle in the same Epistle to the *Hebrews* again, Chap. ix. and x. says, That the Lord went from the Body to Heaven: But as for this *Hades*, or local Place of the Damn'd, in which we cannot actually believe our Saviour was; where it was, is, or will be situated, St. John the Divine tells us, *In the Presence of the holy Angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb*, Rev. xiv. 10. So that God's angry Face shall be upon them for evermore.

Q. *Whether are the Souls of Men pre-existent, or not?*

A. The ingenious Propounder of this Question grounds it not only upon the Opinion of some Fathers, but upon this Apocryphal Text. *For I was a Child, and had a good Spirit*, Wisd. of Sol. viii. 19. And this, in Canonical Writ, where the Disciples enquiring of the blind Man, said to our Saviour, *Master, who did sin, this Man, or his Parents,*

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vents, that he was born blind, Joh. ix. 2. From whence the Gentleman would infer a Pre-existence of Souls; because, had the Disciples Notion been wrong, Christ would have shewn a Dislike to the Question. Now, before we come to speak of the Time of its Formation, we shall take Notice, that when *Moses* speaks of that very Moment when 'twas created, and breathed into Man, he calls it, *חַי נְשָׁמָה*, which may be render'd, *Halitus vitæ*: From whence it may be gather'd, that the Soul being abstracted from all Appearance of visible Matter, its Invisibilty no Man will be able to find among material Objects. The principal and hegemonical Power of the Soul, the *Stoicks* situated in the Heart, as *Aristotle* did, tho' very erroneously, and yet *Plato* had taught him better; for he placed it in the Brains, as the proper Tabernacle for Reason to dwell in. The *Stoicks* had many lofty Thoughts of the Soul's Original; yet all the high Strains of Stoical Philosophy do not sufficiently declare, that they thought the Soul to be of the very same Essence with God himself; but only that they perceived much Similitude between a Soul and a Deity, many bright Resemblances of God stamp'd upon it, which is not only sound Philosophy, but good Divinity too; that the Soul was made according to the Image of its Creator. The *Pythagoreans*, by their *Θεία δύναμις*, do intend no more, than that divine Virtue and Efficacy which the Soul has, which makes it look so like its Creator: Thus they were wont to call the higher Region of the Soul, *τὸ θεῖον*, and the lower, *τὸ διαιώδες*, not understanding by the first, any Particle of a Deity, tho' it may be, by the last, they might the Soul of a Beast, by their supposed *Metempsychosis*. But we meet with none that doth so punctually

punctually and accurately determine this as *Trismegistus* does in these Words. The Soul was not fram'd and carv'd out of the Essence of a Deity, but it rather sprung from the Dilatation and Diffusion of his Power and Goodness, as Beams do from the Sun, when it spreads forth its quickning and cherishing Wings: Yet when you hear the Creatures often stiled the Beams of a Deity, and Drops of a Deity, you must neither imagine, that there is the least Division, or Diminution, or Variation in the most immutable Essence of God; not that the Creature does partake the very Essence of the Creator, but that it hath somewhat of his Workmanship, obvious and visible in it, and according to the Degree of its Being, doth give fainter or brighter Resemblances of its Creator. There is a far greater Disproportion between God and any created Being, than between the real Face and Picture of it; so that if you see any heavenly Beauty, any divine Lineaments sparkling in the Soul, you may presently conclude, that it was *Digitus Dei*; nay, the Hand of God that drew them there, as the shadowy Representations of his most glorious Being. 'Tis the greatest Honour that a Creature is capable of, to be the Picture of its Creator. You know, the very Formality of Creation doth speak a Being raised *ex nihilo*; Creation being the Production of something out of the barren Womb of nothing; and if the Creation must be *ex nullo præ-existente*, then, to be sure, 'tis not extracted out of the Essence of God Himself: But the whole Generality of the antient Heathen Philosophers (tho' they went a gleanings too in the Jewish Fields) had a Veil upon their Face; here they had not a clear and open Sight of the Creation, but only some obscure and imperfect Notions about it, which made them think, that all Corporeals

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poreals were made *ex aliqua præjacente materia*, co-existent with the prime and supreme Efficient; and because they could not fetch Spirituals out of Materials, nor yet conceive that they should be fetch'd out of Nothing, this made them determine, that they sprung out of the Essence of God himself, who, as a voluntary Fountain, could bubble them forth when he pleased. That Fiction of *Materia ab Æterno*, will do them no Service at all; for either it was produced by God himself, and then 'twas created *ex nihilo*; for God himself was a pure immaterial Spirit, and therefore must make Matter where none was before, or else 'twas an independent eternal Being, which makes it another Being, which makes it another Deity; and that involves a flat Repugnancy: Therefore, as corporeal and material Beings were raised out of Nothing, by the infinite Vigour and Power of God; so he can, with the very same Facility, produce spiritual immaterial Beings out of Nothing too. There's another Error too, but 'tis scarce worth mentioning, of some pre-existent Gentlemen, that would have Souls created or made for Bodies, even before they are in *embryo*; that is to say, they would have the Soul created by Angels: But as no secondary Being could create it self, so neither can it create any other Being: Yet so far we will own, 'twas an angelical Breath, but the Breath of a Deity that gave Life to the Soul; and 'twas not made after the Image of an Angel, but of God himself. Angels and Souls both came from the same Almighty Father of Spirits, who shew'd the Greatness of his Power, in raising such goodly Beings, not out of himself, but out of Nothing. As for the Original or first Formation of the Soul, Divines favour the Way of Creation, Physicians, that of Traduction.

Nay, some sacred Writers contend for the Soul's Traduction, who never yet question'd the Perpetuity of it; not only *Tertullian*, but most of the Western Churches also. Besides, we acknowledge, the Truth is, the Original of all Forms is *in profundo*, 'tis very latent and mysterious; yet here the Naturalists must needs own thus much, that the Matter and Form of every Thing, must have at least an incompleat Being before Generation; for by that they do not receive any new absolute Entity; for then it would be a Creation: But the Parts are only collected and disposed, and united by a strict and *Gordian Knot*, by an inward Continuity; so that in all such Productions, the *Materia oritur ex materia, & forma ex forma generantis*; and thus Forms are continued according to that Degree of Being, which they had in the first Creation. Now, why there should not be such a *translatio lampadis* in the Souls of Men, will not easily be shewn; the Nobility and Purity of the Soul doth not at all hinder this; for there is a proportional Eminency in the Soul that doth produce it: One Soul prints another with the same Stamp of Immortality, that it self had engraven upon it. But if any Question, how an immaterial Being can be convey'd in such a seminal Way, let any learned Gentleman but shew us the Manner by which 'tis united to the Body, and we will as easily tell him, how it enter'd it. Yet that great Father of the Church, *Hierom*, was so zealous against this, that he pronounces a present *Anathema* to all such as hold the Soul to be *extraduce*. But *Augustin* was a great deal more calm and pacate; nay, indeed, he was in this Point, in a kind of Equipoise and Neutrality; and therefore, with a gentle Breath, he did labour to fan and cool this Heat of *Hierom's* Opinion; and putting

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putting on all Mildness and Moderation, plainly confesses, *Se neque legendo, neque orando, neque ratiocinando invenire potuisse quomodo cum creatione animarum peccatum originale defendatur.* By which it seems, he could not solve all these Difficulties which the *Pelagians* raised against original Sin, unless he held the Traduction of the Soul. Tho' a sensitive Soul may creep upon the Ground, tho' it may roll and tumble it self in the Dust, yet an intellectual Being scorns to look lower than Heaven it self; and tho' it be dated in Time, yet it means to live as long as Eternity. The Poets had veiled and muffled up the same Opinion in their Mythology; while they tell us, that *Promethæus* (which is all one with Providence) did work and fashion the Bodies of Men out of Clay, but he was fain to steal Fire from Heaven for the quickening and enlivening them with Souls, which made the Prince of *Latin* Poets sing,

Ignem est ollis vigor & cœlestis origo. Æneid 6.

And *Ovid* supplies him with a short Verse.

Sedibus æthereis spiritus ille venit.

But often do you meet with this in *Homer*, that God is the Father of Spirits, *πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε*, the Father of angelical Beings, and the Souls of Men, which *Virgil* twice renders:

—*Hominum sator atque deorum. Æneid. 1. and 11.*

Yet all this While we cannot sufficiently perceive, that the Generality of the *Heathens* did think, that every Soul was immediately created by God himself; but only, that at the first there

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was bestow'd more than ordinary Workmanship upon them, which they knew principally by those generous Motions which they found working in their own Souls; and partly by some Reliques of Mosaical History, that was scatter'd among them.

The Body 'twas rais'd out of the Dust, but the Soul sprang from Heaven, 'twas **צמח עולם** **βλάστημα ἐξ ὕλης**, a Bud of Eternity. And truly, that the Souls of Men should not be *ex traduce* it does somewhat degrade them from that Height of Excellency that belongs to them. We know that Question is full of Bryers and Thorns; but yet we may very well say thus much, that some Scripture Passages favour and countenance this most, that God still breathes in Men living Souls, that they flow from him, in a way of Creation; and that the Soul and Body do still differ in their Original. Thus then we have represented unto you, as indifferently as we can, the State of this great Controversy; and tho' we could easily tell you which Part we do most easily incline to, yet we shall rather refer it to your own Thoughts, with this Intimation, that a modest Hesitancy may be very lawful here, since it's a Question which cannot be determin'd in this Life. However, 'tis enough for us, that the Spirit or Soul of a Man, either by Virtue of its constant Creation, or by Virtue of its first Creation, is immortal; therefore they think unlearnedly, who imagine the Mortality of the Soul, which cannot die; and it sounds as ill to the Ear of Reason, for any (tho' we have here attempted it) to go about to define what it is. The Nature and Quality of this immortal *Ens* defies (as above said) an absolute Determination of its Substance; wherefore, let the indubitable Knowledge of the last Day decide the Matter; in this Life it is a hard Task to know the Infusi-

on thereof into Man, whether by Traduſtion or otherwiſe ; and in the Life to come, thoſe who would advance the Opinion of total Death, and ſtagger the Immortality of the Soul, will then find, it is that ſublime Part of Man which cannot be ſubject to any Annihilation, but will live for ever.

Q. *Is there Salvation for any Heathens ?*

A. It muſt be a very uncharitable Censure that aſſumes the Prerogative of dooming ſo many Millions of Souls, as the *Heathens* make, to the uttermoſt Severity of divine Wrath. Truly, we have great Hopes of the Salvability of ſome of them, and may juſtly think that *Statius's* aſſerting the Certainty of a Deity, tho' in a blind way, may find much more Favour in another World, than *Lucretius*, who believ'd all Things came by Nature, which is but the Inſtrument of God ; and at length this deſperate Slighter of Providence, tho' otherwiſe a *Roman* of very eminent Parts, laid violent Hands upon himſelf. *Cicero's* ſmall Knowledge too of a Godhead, without doubt, may be better rewarded in a future State, than *Lucian's* impiouſly ſcoffing at religious Principles. *Seneca* may find more Mercy for his Tragedies, than *Catullus* for wantonly ſinging *Vivamus mea Leſbia* ; or *Sappho*, for taking more Complacency in her Practices than her Verſes ; or *Anacreon*, the merry *Greek*, who by a moſt emphatical *Tautopathy* was choak'd with the Huſk and Kernel of a Grape, as taking more Delight in his Cups than his Odes. The Juſtice of an *Ariſtides*, the good Laws of *Solon*, or a *Lycurgus*, the formal Devotion of a *Numa Pompilius*, the Prudence of a *Cato*, the Courage of a *Scipio*, the Moderation of a *Fabius*, had all ſome Seeds of Goodneſs ſcatter'd among them. *Auguſtus* pleaſed God better than *Tiberius*;

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Tiberius; *Horatius Cocles* better than a *Cataline* or *Cethegus*; and *Plato* better then *Aristotle*, unless 'tis true what's reported of this last Philosopher, that *Simon* the Just, the High-Priest, reading of Lectures to him a little before his Death, of the Immortality of the Soul, and the Rewards or Punishments which are reserved for another Life, very powerfully, he was not only convinc'd therewith, but was also converted. Thus, as there is no doubt but that some of the learned *Heathens* pleased God better than others, it must be a very uncharitable Thing to exclude them for ever from the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of Bliss; and the Tenet must be exploded as an Affront to divine Mercy, when *Christ* is not a Propitiation for our Sins only, but for the Sins of the whole World.

Q. *We desire you (Gentlemen) to resolve us this Question: What Benefit has Printing been to the World?*

A. It must be confest, that *Typography*, or the Art of Printing, has been a great Means of detecting the Errors of the Church of *Rome*, and diminishing the papal Authority and Insolence; but on the other hand, it must be own'd, there's nothing that occasions louder Complaints, nor indeed has given more just Offence than the present Liberty of the Press. So openly has the *Christian* Faith, as now profess'd by the Church of *England*, been attackt by the *Dissenters*, under Pretence of Reasoning, or undermin'd by a Revival of the ancient Heresies, especially the *Arian* at this time of Day, the Discipline of the Church brought into such Contempt by those that refine upon its Institutions, our Obligation to the moral Part of Religion so treacherously given up or distinguish'd away, one can hardly help wishing the Inventer of the Art had kept

kept to his first less destructive Employment. Every Year produces some great *Genius* or other that pulls down a Pillar of Scripture to build a Pleasure-House of his own. How has *Moses* been mangled to erect a new Figure of the Deluge? What new Revelations have been lately made to set aside Apostolick and Primitive Authority? What Power to throw open the Church's Pale, for those that make Inroads to claim a Right to her Privileges? To mention no more, for 'twere endless to go thro' with 'em, How has Scripture been abus'd, Antiquity made a Jest of, the positive Institutions of our Church not only call'd obsolete, but Marks of *Antichrist*, by those of our own Communion, because they are maintain'd in other Churches, to which we have a just Exception? That the *Turkish* Polity has not yet admitted any Printing at all, seems to be for this Reason, that the *Christian* Religion may not that way find an Entrance, and prevail against theirs. This would be, they reckon, doing more Hurt than Good, as it might do so to the Cause of *Mahomet*. We may learn so much of our Enemies, to prefer the Interests of our Religion to secular Advantage. And since the Abuse is so plain, to condemn that as heartily as they do the Use of it. 'Twere better we wanted some modern Improvements, and a few politick Ends were not served, than these should take into their Train the Pest and Scandal of the Age, and give 'em a Protection. If the Prosperity of this Weapon since it has been form'd against *Zion*, has not something of Horror in it, *Mahometan* Zeal will rise in Judgment against us.

Q. *What are the Inconveniences of going to Law? And, Whether is it sinful or not?*

A. Some

A. Some are so zealous to ruine one another, that *Westminster-hall* is every Term made the Place of Destruction. There they fasten upon, worry and tear one another; and he that gets the better, generally pays so dear for his Victory, that he had better have sat down by the Loss. Not that we would, with the *Socinians*, stretch that Command of our Saviour to his Disciples, To let the Coat go after the Cloak, and make it a Sin against the Gospel, for *Christians* to go to Law, any farther, than that they should not contend for Trifles. *Christianity* lays no body open to be abus'd and impos'd upon, where a legal Remedy may be had. It forbids doing as we would not be done by, and obliges us to Bearing and Forbearing, rather than be Litigious; but takes away no body's Property, nor gives so much Countenance to Unjustice, as to disarm the Oppressed from recovering their Right. Had going to Law been a Crime in it self, it had never been permitted to the *Jews*. They were allow'd it, and had Courts by divine Appointment erected, for the Determination of what belong'd to every Man. And 'tis too much for a few singular Dissenters, upon a Text, to take upon themselves the putting a Bar to *Christian Liberty*, which in all Ages has been admitted. Nor can we see here these Precepts of the Sermon upon the *Mount* can be confin'd, as some would have them, to these first Ages only: That what was legal in those Days, is not the same now. It seems to be from too much Inclination to the World, such Expositions have been set up, that make a Difference in Times and Seasons, as if the Precepts of the Gospel were not always of the same Obligation; and we could excuse our selves in the Contempt of them, because we are not the Persons they were immediately deliver'd

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liver'd to. Tho' the litigious Humour of some Men richly deserves a chargeable Remedy, there is yet a Commiseration due sometimes to their Antagonist. A Man may, whether he will or not, be engag'd in these bloody Conflicts at the Suit of his Neighbour's Pride or Malice. And since the most peaceable Temper may be obliged to complain of Oppression, or answer the Charge of Pique and Revenge; 'tis Pity but Justice were to be obtain'd at a cheaper Rate, and a slight Wound may be cur'd without Amputation, which nothing but a Gangrene can justify. We could wish the Law were less chargeable; that seeking Right were not as bad as suffering Wrong: That the Avenues to Justice were not so beset with Robbers, that a Man must lose one Purse to recover another, and be stript into the Bargain. *Justice* (we are told) should be blind, and so we think she is, when she can't see the exorbitant Fees of her Attendants. When to be let in and let out, costs so much Oppression, nothing could have been severer. When the Man that's summon'd to answer in a litigious Suit, must go thro' so many Tolls, and be so often spunged in his Passage, he might as well have pass'd for guilty, as pleaded Innocence: Like the *Christians* in *Turkey*, who pay double Taxes for their Religion, and hire infidel Moderation to connive at their Patriarch's Jurisdiction. Why these Imposts were laid upon the Road to Justice, we never could understand. How that can be made out, we are much at a Loss. Which of the Liberal Arts or Sciences thrives upon the Fees of Door-keepers? Is Copying and Abbreviation so essential a Point to Learning, a Nation could not have maintain'd such a Character without it? Are so many Lines a Sheet, and so many Words in a Line, so mathematical a

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Substraction of one's Money, that the Credit of the Nation must rise in Proportion to the Losses of the poor meagre, wasted *Culprit*? We are told too, 'tis upon a politick Account, to prevent Contention: That the more difficult is the Way to Justice, the more People are enclin'd to be quiet. If the Courts were open to every Grievance, there would be Complaints without End. A Hog could not go thro' a Stone Yard, but the Law must be rais'd against the Trespasser. A Man could not be an Hour without a *Subpœna* or Attachment, if there was Room for every Body's Impertinence. 'Twould prevent Contention as effectually, if the Person in Fault were punish'd; if paying sufficient Cost to the Adversary or Fine, were inflicted by the Court upon a litigious Plaintiff, or roguish Defendant. As the Case stands, the Law is a Weapon for the Proud and the Revengeful. These may be in the Right, at least have their Revenge, if their Purse be the longest. No short, so chargeable have been the Methods of bringing Oppressors to Account, so expensive the Armour to defend the Innocent; the one may think the first Loss had been the best, and the other wish he had let the Coat go to him that had taken away the Cloak. There's a Revolution indeed of Estates, and where the Law has broke one Family, it has rais'd another. If the Desolation the Law has made, were recorded, and the Ensigns of the Orphans and Widows were hung up, whose forlorn Relations have been press'd into the Service, there would be no Room for those brought from the *Danube* and *Ramelies*. 'Tis true, much may be said in Favour of a mistaken Client, in Excuse of Ignorance, Passion, and the like: But where a Man engages in a Cause palpably litigious and unjust, he becomes a Party

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to the Unjustice, and deserves at least equal Punishment with him he appears for. *Thou sawest a Thief, and consentedst unto him*, is chargeable upon the Pleader, as a Person concerned. Should these Maintainers of Learning be mercenary, and like Serjeants at the *Compter*, gape at every Retainer? Should they have an Indulgence to cross-bite an Evidence, to abuse the Adversary, and rip up the Misfortunes of his Family, and belch a few Wit-ticisms instead of Argument? How shall the World maintain Reverence to their Opinion? How shall we take them for the Guides of Conscience, set aside the received Interpretation of the Law, and believe them when they say, *The Case is alter'd*.

Q. Is it a Sin for the Female Sex, to use artificial Handsomness?

A. The using any auxiliary Beauty, or artificial Handsomness, a Fashion now too much in Vogue in *England*, that is to say, Painting or Patching the Face, is the Devil's Invention, absolutely a Sin; not only in the Abuse, but the very Use; in the Nature of the Thing, and not only in the Intention of the Doer. It is utterly wicked and abominable against the Law of God, the Light of Nature, against Self Shame and Conviction, a Reproach of God, a Perverting of his Works in Nature, a Cheat of others, a Lure and Bait to Sin, a Fruit of Pride and Vanity, poisonous to the Body, and pernicious to the Soul: It is the proper Practice of Harlots and lewd Women; and it is inconsistent with a *Christian* Profession, and a good Conscience. The odious and infamous Way of Painting, every-where in all Ages so much, and so justly spoken against both by God and good Men, is a most ungodly Practice, too much us'd by Persons of Quality in this
C 2 Nation,

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Nation, who, not content with Nature's Stock of Beauty, do (not by a fine, but a filthy Art) add something to the Advantage, as they think, of their Complexions; but rather to the deforming of their Souls, and defiling of their Bodies. We absolutely think all Colours or Complexion added by the Female Sex to their Skins or Faces, beyond what is purely natural, to be a Sin, as being flat against the Word of God, which all must grant to be the indispensable and unchangeable Rule of all moral Holiness, from which we may not warp in the least Degree upon any Pretensions to advance our Honour, Estates, Healths, or Beauties. If you look into 2 *Kings* ix. 30. you shall see wicked *Jezabel*, tho' a Queen, yet not tolerated, or excused, but foully branded, and heavily punish'd for painting her Eyes or Face; for which she was afterward, by a most deformed Destiny, justly devour'd of Dogs. Which fearful Stroke of divine Vengeance, we think is a sufficient Example to scare the most adventurous Woman, from any such sinful and accursed Practice. Moreover, Painting the Face is mentioned in two other Places of Scripture, as the Practice of lewd and wicked Women; and justly falling, not only under the Reproach of the People, and all holy Men, but under God's Dislike and Displeasure; who not only abhors to see the Deformities of our Hearts, but also of our Looks and Out-sides, when they are alter'd, by any Art, from what God and Nature hath made them; whose Works must needs be best, and beyond Man's Amendment. You see, how with a sacred Taunt and Irony, the Spirit of God reproves the *Jewish* Church in her Lewdness and Apostacy: *Lo, they came, for whom thou didst wash thy self, paintedst thy Eyes, and deckedst thy self with Ornaments, and satest upon a*
stately

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stately Bed, and a Table prepar'd before it. Ezek. xxiii. 40, 41. And says another Prophet, *Though thou clothest thy self with Crimson, though thou deckest thee with thy Ornaments of Gold, though thou rentest the Face [the Hebrew is Eyes, as the marginal Note of our English Translation shews] with painting, in vain shalt thou make thy self fair, thy Lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy Life.* Jer. iv. 30. By which Expressions, alluding to the Customs of those Times, the Lord seems extremely to blame, and abhor those Practices there mention'd, amongst which that of Painting is expressed. Again, God in the 3d of *Isaiah*, with Displeasure 'reckoning up the many Arts and Instruments of dressing and adorning, which either Ingenuity and Civility, or Delicacy and Luxury had found out, and fashionably us'd, to gratify the Curiosity, Pride, and Petulancy of the Women of *Jerusalem*, only with those additional Ornaments, which do not pretend to be natural, as all Paint and Complexioning doth, we may very well conclude, that God is much more displeas'd therewith, than he is with any of those Things, which were but professedly artificial Additaments to Nature, and not Counterfeits of Nature. All Painting the Face, or adding to our Handsomeness in point of Complexion, is directly against the 7th Commandment, which forbidding to commit Adultery with others, as the highest Ascent or Degree of Sin, in that kind, doth also forbid all Means and Occasions, either necessarily tending, or studiously intending that evil End, which leads others, or exposes our selves into Temptations of amorous Folly. While we disguise and alter our Faces, not only as to God and Man's Aspect, but even as to our own, we are not what we seem to be, our selves; and
being

being once alter'd by Art from what is native, we must look for another Face, before we can find, and see our selves in that Glass, which at once flatters, upbraids, and deceives us, while it represents our Looks, other than God hath made them and us; whereas the wise Creator hath by Nature impressed on every Face of Man and Woman, such Characters, either of Beauty or Majesty, or at least Distinction, as he sees sufficient for his own Honour, our Content, and others social Discerning or Difference, whereby to avoid Confusions or Mistakes; so as there shall not need any further Additionals of Art, which put a kind of *Metamorphosis* or fabulous Change on God's and Nature's Work. In that Variety which God hath set forth his noblest Creatures (which are after his own Image) even Mankind, in a kind of Checquer-work of some handsome, and others unhandsome, some pallid, and others ruddy, every one, we think, ought to content themselves with that Colour and Complexion, as well as Features which God hath given them, not only in order to their particular subsisting, but as to the general Symmetry of his Works; in which he hath (as skilful Painters do in their Pictures) set forth his more quick and lively Colours (which are in some Faces) by those deep and darker Shadows that are in others. If the most accurate Pencils were but Blottings, which presum'd to mend *Zeuxis* and *Apelles's* Works; who may presume to add any thing, where God hath put to his last and completing Hand, which is both able and wise to do what he sees best? The holy Fathers of old almost with one Voice, absolutely cry down, and damn to Hell all Painting, or Colouring the Face, in order to advance the Beauty of it, as a Sin not small and disputable, but of the first Magnitude.

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tude. *Tertullian* argues against it, as the Devil's counterfeiting and marking of God, by seeking to mend his Works, as if God needed his Enemy's Help to compleat his Creatures. The veiled Virgins in antient Times were told, that the Devil by these Arts doth but distort and poyson what God hath made handsome and wholesome. Thus by what we have here said, the female Sex may see, that auxiliary Beauty seems not to us any Beauty, but only Deformity; so that a painted Lady is to be look'd upon rather as some Spectre or *Empusa*, than as a handsome Woman.

Q. As the Water is open to all, can a Prince claim any Dominion over the Sea?

A. That the Sea is no whit less capable of private Dominion, than the Land, in Numbers you shall find it written, Let your Borders be the greatest Sea, that is the main Ocean and its Islands. We also read, that Pompey the Great, being Admiral of a great Navy, had a Commission given him by the Senate, as absolute Lord of the Sea, because it was in Subjection to, being wholly subdu'd by, the Roman Power. The Borders are in the midst or Heart of the Sea, saith the Prophet Ezekiel of the Tyrians: And it is affirm'd in antient History, that the City of Tyre built by Agenor, made not only the neighbouring Sea, but what Seas soever her Ships sail'd in, to be of her Dominion. There was an antient Custom us'd in the East, that when great Kings had a Design to bring any Nation under their Power, they commanded Water and Earth, the Pledges of Empire and Dominion, to be deliver'd unto them; conceiving, that the Command of the Sea, as well as of the Land, was signified by such a Token. And if we take a View of these late Times, as to the

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the Rights and Customs of foreign Nations, we shall find, that the Commonwealth of *Venice* hath enjoy'd the Dominion of the *Adriatick* Sea for many Ages. The *Tuscans* to this Day have an absolute Dominion in the *Tyrrhene* Sea, and these of *Genoa* in the *Lygustick*. Having thus in general given an Account, that almost among all Nations there hath been allow'd a private Dominion of the Sea, we shall now come to our own Country and inform the Proposer of this Question, that the antient *Britons* did enjoy and possess the Sea, as Lords thereof, before they were subjected to the *Romans*. At the coming of *Julius Caesar* into this Island, we find that the *Britons* us'd the Sea as their own for Navigation and Fishing; and withal permitted none besides Merchants to sail into the Country, without their Leave; nor any Man at all to sound or view their Sea-Coasts or Harbours. Amongst several Kings of old, that not only ruled this Land, but had also Dominion over the Sea, we find none more potent than King *Edgar*; who possessing an absolute Dominion of the Sea, sail'd round it once a Year, and secur'd it with a constant Guard of Ships, of which, as is reported, he had 4800 stout ones; and what Dominion this was King *Edgar* had as absolute Lord of the Seas, appears in these Words: *I Edgar King of England, and of all the Kings of the Islands, and of the Ocean lying about Britain, and all the Nations that are included within the Circuit; and so forth.* After him, King *Canutus* left a Testimony, whereby he most expressly asserts the Sea to be a Part of his Dominion; for placing himself by the Sea-Side on *Southampton* Shore, he is reported by *Heath* and *Meriton*, in their Chronicles and History of *England*, to have made Tryal of the Sea's Obedience in this Manner: *Thou, O*
Sea,

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Sea, art under my Dominion, as the Land also which I sit upon is mine ; therefore I command thee not to wet the Feet or Garments of thy Sovereign. Altho' the Event did not answer his Expectation, yet by this he profess'd himself to be Sovereign of the Seas as well as Land. And there is nothing more clear, than that the Kings of England have been accustomed to constitute Governours, who had a Charge to guard the English Sea, and these were call'd Custodes maritimi; in which Number one Thomas de Moleton was call'd Captain and Guardian of the Sea; but this Title was afterwards changed into Admiral, in the Days of Edward the Third, whose principal End of calling one Parliament, was concerning the Preservation of Peace both by Land and Sea ; giving us to understand, that the Land and Sea together, made one entire Body of the Kingdom of England.

Q. From whence are the Names of these Chaldean Kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Mero-dach deriv'd ?

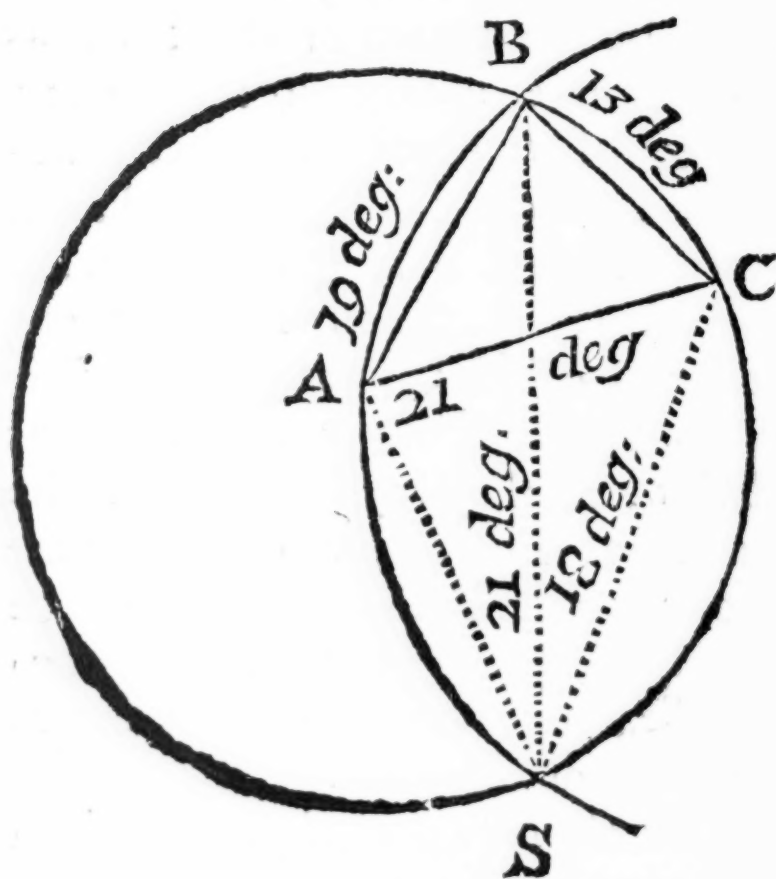
A. These three Chaldean Kings, who make the golden Head, the Lion and the Bear, mentioned by Daniel, took their Names from three Babylonian Gods, namely, Nabo, Bel, and Mero-dac, which gave occasion to the Prophet to note, that the Chaldean would attribute his Strength unto his God, according to this Text, Then shall his Mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his Power unto his God. Hab. i. 11.

Q. If the Distances between any 3 Objects are known, and the Angle they make with each other from some known Point or Station in the same Plain, how will you find the Distance of either of those Objects from the said Station ?

A. Thus : Let the 3 Objects be A, B, C, and their Distances and Angles as in the annexed Diagram

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gram ; upon the Line *A B* describe the Segment *A S B* of a Circle that shall contain the Angle of 21 Degrees ; also upon the right Line *B C* describe the Segment of a Circle that shall contain



an Angle of 18 Degrees. Now since we must stand in the Periphery of both these Circles, to behold the Objects under those Angles, 'tis evident it must be in the Point *S* of their Intersection ; for if from the Point *S* you

draw the right Lines *S A*, *S B*, *S C*, they will form the given Angles ; and therefore, if by the Scale with which you plotted the Triangle *A B C*, you measure the Lines *S A*, *S B*, *S C*, you will get the Distance of the said Point from either of the Objects, which was the Thing required ; and by the Help of this Problem you may likewise find the true Position of Sands and Rocks, that are near the Shore, or within Sight of 3 Places at Land, whose Distances are known.

Q. What is the Meaning (Gentlemen) of this short Saying of St. Paul's, The Letter killeth, 2 Cor. iii. 6?

A. The Gentleman who sends us this Question says the primitive Fathers of the Church, in their Paraphrase on the abovesaid Words, agree that literal Interpretations of the Law and Book of Moses

Moses, are very pernicious and destructive of them, which differs from this of *Tertullian* on the same Place of the Apostle, *Denique qui literam tabulis lapideis inciderat, idem & de spiritu edixerat, effundam de meo spiritu in omnem carnem: & si litera occidit, spiritus verò vivificat, ejus utrunque est qui ait, Ego occidam & ego vivificabo, percutiam & sanabo: olim duplicem vim creatoris vindicamus & judicis & boni, litera occidentis per legem, & spiritu vivificantis per evangelium.* Advers. Marcion. lib. 5. Which Citation agrees to the Context, following these Words, *The Letter killeth*, which only shews the Excellency of the Gospel, which gives Life and Liberty, to be more glorious than the Law of Condemnation. And in this Sense do *Tremellius* and *Beza* (tho' different in their Versions of the New Testament, one rendering it *Scriptura enim occidit*, the other *Nam litera occidit* take it, in their Annotations on the 3d Chapter of *St. Paul's* 2d Epistle to the *Corinthians*. But it would be no bad Note upon this Saying, *The Letter killeth*, to say, that the Meaning thereof may signify not only the temporal Death, but also an eternal one hereafter, of ignorant, illiterate People, that shall presume to interpret the Oracles of God after their own idle Fancies, and whimsical Imaginations; for in the Lectures of holy Scripture, their Apprehensions are commonly confin'd unto the literal sense of the Text, from whence ensu'd the gross and duller Sorts of Heresies. The Vulgar not attaining the Deuteroscopy, and second Intention of the Words, they are fain to omit their Superconsequences, Coherences, Figures, or Tropologies, and are not sometime persuaded by Fire beyond their Literalities; which Humour unhappily possessing many Men (especially in our own Country) they have by Pre-

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judice withdrawn themselves into Parties, and condemning the Sovereignty of Truth, seditiously abetted the private Divisions of Error.

Q. Must a whole Day, or a fourth, half, sixth, or a seventh Part thereof be kept for a Sabbath, and the sacred Part be regularly fixt to the Beginning, Middle, or End of the said whole half, or any other certain Part of Limited Time? As the 7th Day was fixt for the Sabbath, in Memory of the Creation, are we bound to commemorate it at the periodical Returns of the Time, wherein it was finish'd; or to resolve it in an absolute Pleasure of God's own, whereby he could have consecrated the 7th Day, tho' the Creation had cost him only six Minutes, six Hours, or any greater or lesser Time than six Days? Since Reason cannot discover how long Time the divine Power employ'd in the Creation, nor what Time the divine Wisdom consecrated in Memory of that great Work, how comes this Precept to be a Part of the moral Law? Why is not this divine Precept still observ'd, when neither our Saviour, nor his Apostles, have declar'd it void, or establish'd a new one in its room, by any positive Institution? Since Christians keep the first Day of the Week, instead of the last, as the original Precept commands, how can the Practice of Men contrary to a divine and standing Law be binding to us, when it is not reveal'd that the said Practice is authoriz'd by God, who, we are sure, establish'd that Law which it contradicts? In celebrating the Christian Sabbath to the Memory of our Saviour's Resurrection, are we not to have Respect to the Creation; and if so, why does it not begin at Twelve of the Clock on Saturday, or at least about Sun-setting in, Allusion to the Creation which once had a whole Day to itself? Why is the Christian Sabbath fixt in Memory of the Resurrection, and not of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, when Man's
Redemption

Redemption was compleated? In reading the Law in the Service of the Church of England, is it not either improper to read the Fourth Commandment, which relates only to the Jewish Sabbath; or in the People to pray God would enable them to observe that Law, when neither the Day of the Christian Sabbath, nor the Facts in Memory of which it is kept, are therein specified?

A. The Gentleman has sent us a great many Questions about the Sabbath: In answering which, we shall be as brief as we can. First, As the Sabbath Day, God had set entirely apart for his own Service, he would not be serv'd by Halves, in having but a third, fourth, fifth, or a sixth Part thereof, dedicated to him. Secondly, As a Seventh Day is a Precept of God, whereby he commands us to worship him, we are bound to observe punctually the periodical Returns thereof; and to know, that if it had been his Pleasure, he could, tho' he had created the World but in six Minutes, have appointed the Seventh Day for his Holy Day. Thirdly, The Propounder of these Questions owns the Creation to be perform'd in six Days, and here denies it, tho' Moses in his Pentateuch particularly describes the Work of each Day, whereby we know the Observation of the Seventh Day, whereon God rested from all his Works, Gen. ii. 2. is a moral Commandment. Fourthly, Tho' this Precept was renewed in the Laws, when God gave the Commandment to Moses on Mount Sinai, written with his own Finger on two Tables of Stone; yet was the Jewish Sabbath chang'd into Sunday, because Christ was born upon a Sunday, rose from the Dead upon a Sunday, and sent down the Holy Ghost upon a Sunday; Works not inferiour to the Creation of the World. Again, we know, that a Day set apart for the
Service

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Service of God, is of divine Right, and of the Law of Nature; tho' the determining this particular Day, *Sunday*, rather than *Saturday*, be a Church Ordinance and Precept: However, when Christ confirmed the other Commandments, he also confirmed this, in as much as it belonged to the Law of Nature, but not as it belonged to the ceremonial Law of the *Jews*, and was affixed to *Saturday*, which was abrogated, and ceased to oblige after the Death of Christ. *Fifthly*, We know not that Christ, who is *Lord of the Sabbath*, Mark ii. 28. has in any wise by Inspiration of his Apostles after his Death, inform'd them of his not approving of the Change of the *Jewish Sabbath* into that observ'd now under the *Christian OEconomy*. *Sixthly*, The *Jewish Sabbath* began at Six a Clock the Night before; which Time of Preparation for it, the *Hebrews* call'd *Biath haschabbath*, that is, the Entrance of the *Sabbath*: And which Addition of Time was two-fold; for some began the *Sabbath* sooner than others, as it was done by the *Jews* dwelling at *Tiberias*; because, they dwelling in a Valley, the Sun appear'd not to them so soon as it did to others. Some again continued the *Sabbath* longer than others, as the *Jews* dwelling at *Tsepphore*, a City placed upon the Top of a Hill, so that the Sun shined longer to them than it did to others; and thus both of these did *addere de profano ad sacrum*, add somewhat of the Working-Day immediately going before, or immediately following after. And here we must further take Notice, That as *Moses* taught the People to remember the *Sabbath* over Night, so it was a holy Custom among our Fore-fathers, when at the Ringing to Prayers on the Eve before, the Husbandman would give over his Labour in the Field, and the Tradesman his Work

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in the Shop, to go to Vespers, or Evening-Prayers in the Church, to prepare themselves for the Sabbath. *Seventhly*, The Christian Sabbath was rather observ'd on the Day of Christ's Resurrection, than that of the Holy Ghost's descending on the Apostles, because our Saviour was the Author and Finisher of our Faith and Redemption. And, *Eighthly*, It is not improper to read the Fourth Commandment; because, as it speaks only of Jewish Sabbaths, it has no other Force upon Christians, than to put us in Mind then to observe one Day in Seven for the Service of God, on which he has set a Memento, a Remember, such as upon no other Commandment, to keep it holy.

Q. Gentlemen, a Friend of mine having liv'd upon his Means a considerable Time, in Expectation of Employment, has very near exhausted his Estate, so that the Remainder is not sufficient to maintain him, according to his former Way of living, without being troublesome to his Friends, from whom he does not in the least doubt of a Supply, till a Time of Preferment alters his Condition, who is now much in Debt: But in Case of a Disappointment, I shall be a considerable Loser by him; therefore, he desires to know, what you would advise him in this Matter; for which he will remain your humble Servant?

A. By this Letter, writ from on Board a Ship, we understand, a Gentleman has wasted his Substance in depending on Preferment; which Expectation is such a hard Case attending some Men, that Mr. Cowley truly says,

*Were I to really curse the Man I hate,
Let Attendance and Dependance be his Fate.*

But you say, Sir, his Money is all gone; What then? Why! let him rest contented, since he that
has

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has most, wants something; and he that hath least, is in something supplied; wherein the Mind which makes rich, may well possess him with the Thought of Store. We shall find none so miserable, but we shall hear of another that would change Calamities. Again, you inform us, he has Friends, from whom he may expect a Supply: But then let us tell you, That his Importunities may not only breed a Dislike in them to hear, but also, when the Conference is ended, beget a repenting Sorrow in him that to'd his sad Tale, and make him wish, he had lock'd up his Lips in Silence, rather than have pour'd out his mean Circumstances with such Indiscretion: Therefore, (after advising you to be a merciful Creditor to a distressed Debtor) we would have your Friend to make the best Advantage of what small Matter he has left; for 'tis *Money makes the Mare to go*: And to consider, that Man is but meerly the Ball of Fortune, being sometimes taken from the Plow to the Throne; and sometimes again from the Throne to the Halter.

VIENNA, *December* 16. 1719. N. S.

Q. **A**RE Men bound to give their Assent to what General Councils determine?

A. Men may represent the Bodies of others, in civil and temporal Affairs, in the Acts of a Kingdom; and thus a bodily Obedience is always due to just Authority; but there is none can always represent the Mind and Judgment of another, in the Vitals and Inwards of Religion. A General Council does, and may produce *judicium forense*,
but

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but still there is reserved to every single *Individuum, judicium rationale*: For can you think, that God will excuse any one from Error, upon such an Account as this, such a Doctor told me thus, such a Piece of Antiquity inform'd me so, such a General Council determin'd me to this? Where was thy own Reason all this While? Yet this must be gratefully acknowledg'd, that these General Councils have been of publick Influence, of most admirable Use and Advantage to the Church of God, tho' they are not of the very Essence of it; for 'tis well known, there were none of them till the Days of *Constantine*: But herein is the Benefit of Councils, that they are (or ought to be) a comparing and collecting of many Lights, an uniting and concentricating of the Judgments of many holy, learned, wise *Christians*, with the Holy Ghost breathing amongst them, tho' not always so fully and powerfully, as that they shall be sure to be privileg'd from every Error; but being all of them subject to Frailty and Fallibility, and sometime the major Part of them proving the peior Part, there is none bound to give an extemporary Assent to their Votes and Suffrages, unless his Mind also concurs with theirs.

Q. *Can Astrologers and others, who pretend to tell Fortunes, have a Prescience of future Contingencies?*

A. No; for the *Astrologer* only flatters himself in his own imaginary Operations, and perswades the more simple and credulous Part of the World, that he can discover every future Atom; and that putting the Silver Letters of the Stars together, he can spell out all the Fates of Kingdoms and Persons. This vain Opinion also makes the *Aur* chatter with the Birds in their own Dialects; and, as if he were their Scholiast, he writes Com-

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ments and Expositions upon their Language. The *Exspex* consults with the Inwards of Beasts, to search into the Bowels of Things: He'll but look upon a Liver, and will presently tell you the Colour and Complexion of all Affairs. The *Aruspex* beholds the Behaviour of the dying Sacrifice; and, from the Quietness and Struggling of those sensitive Creatures, pretends to foretel the Reluctancies and Facilities in higher Matters. And the *Chiromancer* studies to read those Lines that seem to be scribed upon his Hand, and to explain them with his own interlineary Glosses; so that he looks upon them as Nature's Manuscript, as an *Enchiridion* of Nature's Penning, in which she gave him a brief *Synopsis* of all such Passages of his Life, as should come into Being afterwards. The *Assyrians*, the *Chaldeans*, the *Persians*, the *Græcians*, and the *Romans*, have had always amongst them several Professors of these Vanities. However, these great Pretenders do very frequently deceive both themselves and others in the most ordinary and easy Scrutinies, which might clothe our Almanacks with more red, and put them to the Blush, for guessing at the Weather no better, whereupon we may write upon them, *Nulla dies sine errato*. Did they never threaten you with Thunder and Lightning enough to make a *Caligula* prepare new Laurels, when yet the Heavens prov'd very pacate and propitious? Did they never tell you of a sad discontented Day, which would weep its Eyes out; which, when it was born, prov'd a *Democritus*, and did nothing but laugh at their Ignorance and Folly? Did they never flatter you with fine, pleasant, temperate Weather, when the Rain descending, the Winds blowing, and the Hail beating, the Prediction fell, because 'twas built upon so weak a Foundation?

tion? Hence we may conclude, that the sensitive Creatures, the Crows, and the Cranes, and the Swallows, that know their appointed Times, are more happy and successful in their Predictions, and are better directed by their feeling the Impression of some heavenly Bodies, than Men are by their seeing of them. In fine, propheticall Springings come not from the Will of Man, but from the Breathings of the Holy Ghost, as God himself is $\acute{o} \acute{\omega}\nu$, $\eta \acute{o} \acute{\omega}$, $\eta \acute{o} \acute{\epsilon}\rho\chi\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\iota\theta$, so he will have a Prophet to be a Shadow of himself. $\acute{o}\varsigma \tau\acute{\eta}\delta\eta \tau\acute{\alpha} \tau' \acute{\epsilon}\acute{o}\nu\tau\alpha \tau\acute{\alpha} \tau' \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha \pi\epsilon\acute{\rho} \tau' \acute{\epsilon}\acute{o}\nu\tau\alpha$, which Virgil well translates thus,

——— *Novit namque omnia vates,
Quæ sint, quæ fuerint, quæ mox ventura trahantur.*
Georg. Lib. 4.

God thus revealing and communicating his Mind to his Prophets, doth clearly manifest, that he himself hath an exact Knowledge of future Events: He doth expressly shew, that he doth *curare res humanas*, that he is *actor & ordinator futurorum*, and that his Providence doth over-rule the greatest Contingencies.

Q. What is Eternity?

A. Eternity is what we may call one bright and perpetual Day, which by its pure and uninterrupted Irradiations, doth at one Draught swallow up the whole Fluency of Time, and is infinitely above those temporal Conditions, of past, present, and to come. The *Indians* have a Custom, once a Year, to cast a golden Bushel into the Sea, and thus they think they set a Measure and Boundary to its proud Waves, so as it shall not invade their Land; and just so would it be as ridiculous, and far more vain, to pretend to circumscribe *Eternity*

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within the greatest Number of *Arithmetick*, because its Circumference is too infinite to be comprehended by any human Capacity. There is no Succession in Eternity. There can be no *prius* & *posterius*, where there was no Beginning. Even the very Soul of Man cannot be a competent Judge of Eternity; for being here conversant only with transient Things, that have their *ortum* & *occasum*, their *fluxum* & *refluxum*; their Spring and Autumn, their Bounds and their Bottom, 'tis not so well acquainted with its Duration; and yet it can far better behold the back Parts of Eternity, than the Face of it, Eternity *a parte post*, than Eternity *a parte ante*; because the Soul it self is measur'd by that Duration. In a Word, Eternity is not at all spent and exhausted by Continuance, but is always *in vigore viridi*, that is to say, it is a flourishing Duration that never withers or decays.

Q. *What is the Difference betwixt Nature and Fortune?*

A. A great deal: For as *Nature* is that regular Line, which the Wisdom of God has drawn in Being, that which is miscall'd *Fortune*, is nothing but a Line fuller of Windings and Varieties: And as *Nature* is a fix'd and ordinary Kind of *Providence*, so *Fortune* is nothing but a more abstruse, and mysterious, and occult Kind of *Providence*; and therefore, as *Providentia, fatum, natura, casus, fortuna sunt ejusdem nomina Dei*, Fortune was not blind, as the *Heathens* falsely painted and represented her, but they themselves were blind, and could not see into her. Now *Nature* speaks two Things, that is to say, it points out *originem entis*, which is a Principle of working in Spiritu- als, as well as in Corporeals. Hence it is, that such Workings, as are facilitated by Customs, are esteemed

esteemed natural ; and Customs being frequently ingrafted into Nature, hence also our usual Idiom calls a good or bad Disposition a good or bad Nature ; so that looking upon the Diversities of Nations, we say you may see a rough and barbarous *Scythian*, a wild *American*, an unpolisht *Indian*, a superstitious *Egyptian*, a subtle *Æthiopian*, a cunning *Arabian*, a luxurious *Persian*, a treacherous *Carthaginian*, a lying *Cretian*, an elegant *Athenian*, a gallant *Roman*, a wanton *Corinthian*, a desperate *Italian*, a fighting *German*, and many other People who are all inclin'd to particular Qualities.

Q. What is the Meaning of this Proverb which the Jews use, We must leap up to Mount Gerizim, but creep up into Mount Ebal.

A. As upon Mount Gerizim all the Blessings were pronounc'd by Moses, and upon Mount Ebal all the Curses, so then the Jews would signify by this Proverb, you must leap up to Mount Gerizim, that you must be forward and ready to bless ; but creep into Mount, Ebal that is, you must be slow and unwilling to curse ; unless 'tis when God gives special Command to curse, and then you must leap up into Mount Ebal too ; thus the Angel of the Lord said, Curse ye Meroz, which Curse did not come out of any revengful Thoughts, or private Respect that Deborah had, but that she had a special Command from above to curse them.

Q. Had a King better have the Love or Fear of his Subjects ?

A. It would be a better Piece of Policy for a King to rule his Subjects with a Sceptre of Gold, than a Rod of Iron ; he had better engage them by Love, than enslave them by Fear ; for tho' this may seem to add some Sparklings to Majesty, and

and to brighten the Crown of Sovereignty, yet it leaves it far more tottering and more unfixed and unsettled upon their Heads. There is such a Virulency mixt with Fear, such a Tincture of Hatred in it, that was a Body pull'd, and haled, and scar'd into Obedience, yet with all this would not the Soul be conquer'd; the Slave would still watch an Opportunity for shaking off the Yoke of Tyranny, which always is the Effect of a despotick arbitrary Power.

Q. What is the Danger of Schism?

A. It hinders the Communion of the Saints, draws Evil out of Good, kindles the Fire of Hell out of the Word of God, by wrong expounding the Scriptures, stops the Progress of the Gospel, and gives great Advantage to the Enemies to set up the Kingdom of *Satan*; thus the Church becomes militant against herself, and the Enemy triumphant. But the Devil loves to dance at Discord; for when he heard that so goodly and populous City as that of *Corinth* once was, was like to entertain the Gospel, he knew no better way to hinder the Success of it, than by presently planting a Spirit of Discord among them; as well knowing that a Kingdom divided against itself could not long stand.

Q. Is a just Man afraid to die?

A. No; for at the Hour of Death, he knows that Providence then means only to break the Shell, that it may have the Kernel. 'Tis only they that tremble at the Knockings and Approaches of Death, that know not what shall become of their Souls hereafter: Men, who, thro' the Fear of Death, have been all their Life-time subject to Bondage. The just Man safely tramples upon the Adder, and plays in the Cockatrice's Den. And the Martyrs did thus, when they embraced
Flames,

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Flames, and complimented with Lions, and come to them with an Appetite, to wear a Crown of Glory as soon as they could.

OXFORD, *December 11th, 1719.*

Q. *By a Gentleman lately arriv'd in this City from London, being inform'd that the Gentlemen of the Society of the Delphick Oracle there are exerting their Parts against Women painting themselves, some young Ladies here implore the favourable Assistance of you Oxonians who are Members of the same Fraternity, in giving your Opinion of artificial Handsomeness, for which we shall be extreamly oblig'd to you; and in order thereto, we desire to know, what Defence your Wit and Learning can make for our improving Beauty by Art?*

A. Why truly, Ladies, the Members of the Society of the *Delphick Oracle* at *London*, being Gentlemen of bright Parts, and having undertaken the Subject of exclaiming against artificial Beauty, we must expect some Foible in deviating from their Opinion, because they have Scripture and Fathers on their side; but yet to oblige the fair Sex, we will, for this once, engage to espouse your Cause as well as we can, in shewing that Women who paint, do not thereby forsake *Christ's* Banner, to fight under the Devil's Colours. However, as we will not undertake to justify all those that use Painting, so we will not dare to condemn all who may use and do the same Things, with different Minds, and to every distant Ends. We have sent for a Copy of our Brothers Manuscript from *London*, and finding what Observations they raise
against

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against artificial Handsomness, we are the better able to satisfy the Ladies Request. They cite *Jezabel's* Painting against you; but we cannot fix that signal and heavy Judgment of God upon her, only, or chiefly, or indeed at all, for painting herself, because it was an After-Act; and as to that Time or Instant in the Story, comes at least 14 Years behind that dreadful Doom which was by the Prophet *Elisha* foretold upon the Score of *Naboth's* Blood unjustly shed, and his Inheritance cruelly usurped. So that her painting her Eyes or Face is indeed (among other occasional Circumstances) recorded, but to a far different End or Use, than either to lay the Weight of the subsequent Punishment, or the Guilt of any Sin upon that Act more than upon the other concomitant Actions therewith recited. In this respective Consideration, we cannot but see but that the bare historical Narration of *Jezabel's* painting herself, among other Actions (which we must confess too to be innocent in themselves) if it did refer to any wanton Design, which is very unlikely at that time, in a Queen, whose proud and violent Spirit might now justly be carried away with other Passions and Transports than those of Lust, yet it doth no way argue or import the Use of that, or other Things therewith mentioned, to be in themselves any Sins; to all that then did, or after should, use the like Applications, Words, or Actions, out of far different Minds, and to far different Ends; which are beyond all Dispute the proper Grounds and Rules of all moral Denominations, as to Good or Evil, in those mediate Actions, Agents and Instruments, whose Freedom in Nature, falls not under any special Restraint of God's Command, forbidding them by any positive Law, as he did
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many things in point of Food, Clothes, Fashions, and other civil Actions among the Jews. We cannot think that *Dives* went to Hell, only because he was a rich Man, clothed in Purple and fine Linnen, and fared sumptuously every Day. Luke, xvi. 19. All which things many Persons of as good as great Quality, of no less Virtue and Piety than Honour and Estate, daily enjoy without any Blame. Nor was it *Lazarus* his Poverty and Dunghill, or his Sores and the charitable Tongues of the Dogs, that brought him to Heaven. The Luxury, Pride, and Uncharitableness of the one; the Patience, Humility and Sanctity of the other, made that grand Discrimination of their Fates. Nor may we think, that the beheading of *John Baptist*, is any valid Argument against all Dancing, as if it were absolutely evil and unlawful in itself; not only mixt of both Sexes, but alone and single, as that of the Daughter of *Herodias* was; who is said by St. *Matthew* to have danced not with, but before *Herod* and the Company; that sad Event was the proper Effect, not of the orderly Motions of *Herodias's* Daughter's Feet, but of the inordinate Strokes of her Affections; her wanton Pride and impious Despite against, not so much the Person, as the Doctrine of that holy Man; who never reprov'd (that we read) hers or others Dancing, as to the civil Custom of the Country or the Court, but her adulterous Compliances with *Herod's* Lust: *John* was not a stumbling Block to her Feet, an Eye-sore to her Eyes, and a Corrosive to her Ears, by his chaste Monitions, and holy Severities. So, *Herod's* sudden crumbling into Worms, may be justly urg'd against the Pride and Arrogance of any Mortal in God's Sight; but it is misapply'd against the Purple, Thrones

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and Orations of Princes. In like sort we believe *Jezabel's* painting, and other ways dressing or adorning herself, to be no more Prejudice in point of Sin against a sober, modest, and ingenuous Use of those Things, than *Leah's* bargaining with *Rachel* for her Sons Mandrakes, was any Charm or Cause of her conceiving that Night with Child by her hired Husband. If all that *Jezabel*, or other notorious Sinners mentioned in Scripture did, at any time, in order to accomplish any evil Design, is therefore to be branded and avoided as a Sin, we may not call a solemn Assembly, or keep a Fast, because *Jezabel* did both, in order to palliate with Shews of Justice, and Prefacings of Religion, her detestable Murder and Disinherison of *Naboth*. Nor may we use fair Words and affable Gestures, because *Absalom's* Ambition did abuse those popular Arts. We must not kiss or embrace a Friend, because *Joab* did so when he basely kill'd both *Abner* and *Amasa*; as also *Judas* did when he betray'd *Christ*; nay Staves and Lanthorns, and Torches must not be us'd, because they sometime waited upon the ingrateful Traytor. We may not weep, because *Ishmael's* Treachery did so, when he intended to slay *Gedaliah*. In which Cases the Designs were apparently wicked and base; yet are not all those concomitant Actions such, much less these recorded of *Jezabel*; whose Aim certainly was not any Allurement, but a Defiance and Affront to *Jehu*; shewing how little she was terrified by his Presence, Power and Success; at which she appear'd neither dejected nor deformed, after the manner of those squallid Suppliants, who poorly and pitifully stoop below themselves to beg their Lives; which she scorn'd to do, by any the least Diminution or Abatement of her wont-
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ed Grandeur, Glory, or Splendor. As the mentioned Circumstances receive no Credit or Honour by *Jezabel's* Name, so nor any Disparagement, since different Minds make the Difference of Manners; nor is it strange for the wicked to do the same Things that worthy Persons do, to divers Ends.

Again, we ought not to rack and disjoint Scriptures, whose Sense for the most Part, is not to be taken in the broken Parts, and sever'd or distracted Limbs, but in the Juncture and Intireness of the whole Discourse, which shews the Scope and Design of the Spirit of God; which is not either to condemn or commend every Particular mentioned in the Procedure of any Place, where yet the main Design is to commend or condemn, something there eminently proposed, and chiefly aim'd at. We read our Saviour *Christ* commending the Providence and Self-Preservation of the *unjust Steward*, Luke xvi. 8. but not his Falsity and Injustice; which yet is there brought in as the fraudulent Method of this worldly Wisdom and Forecast. So *Jacob*, by his Mother's Craft and Imposture, obtain'd the Blessing from his cheated and aged Father, beyond any Revocation; yet the sinister Arts there used, are not to be imitated or approved; however, the Desire of a paternal Blessing (which then was solemn, and sacramental) might be as commendable in him, as the undervaluing of it was a profane Temper in *Esau*. If commendable Ends do not justify evil Means in any, no more may evil Ends (as the great Apostle of the *Gentiles* hints, *Rom.* iii. 8.) in some, blemish the Use of lawful Things in others, who apply them to sober and good Ends. Who doubts but *Queen Esther*, a devout and gracious Woman, might lawfully use, as we

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read she did, all those Purifications appointed her: That she apply'd to her Advantage all the Attractives of sweet Unguents and Perfumes, of costly Raiment and beautiful Colours, of rich and accurate Dressings, or lovely Adornings, such as were usual to the *Persian* Delicacy, Softness and Luxury, hereby to win and confirm more the King's Affection and sensual Love to her? Her using all these was so far from being Sin, that it had been so far a Sin not to use them, as she had rather tempted God, than pleas'd him, by neglecting to use those Means which might (most probably) in ordinary Providence conduce to those great and good Ends, which her holy, chaste, and charitable Heart intended to God's Glory and the Church's Good. We read *Rebecca*, in the primitive Plainness and shepherdly Simplicity of those Times, accepted Bracelets and other Ornaments, to be put on her Arms, Neck, and Ears, without any Disparagement to her Virgin Modesty; so *Solomon's* chief Wife, and Queen, *Pharaoh's* Daughter, turning Profelyte, is brought in as a Type of the Church of the *Gentiles* espoused to *Christ*, and adorn'd with all princely Riches, and costly Curiosities, that the King might take Pleasure in her Beauty *Psal.* xlv. 9, 11. Thus, as we shall never be able to reconcile the Clashings and Diversities of the Scripture Stile and Expressions, sometime complaining of, other while commending the same Things, unless we distinguish of the same Things, in their several Uses and Abuses, as it were into their Cross and Pile, their Day and Night, according as the Mind of the User or Abuser; either lightens or darkens them, we can't perceive those Texts of *Ezekiel*, chap. xxiii. ver. 40, 41. and *Jeremiab*, chap. iv. 30. absolutely to

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to condemn Women painting themselves. As for that Citation out of the 3d of *Isaiah*, against artificial Beauty, we reply, If the Lord had a greater Displeasure against the Use of any colouring or complexioning of the Face or Skin, it is strange, that it is not expressed in this Place, which is the Bill of Women's Ornaments, and with some special Note of Dislike, when in all Probability the Women in *Jerusalem* did as much use that as any other Thing, as more nearly contributing to their Beauty; therefore we may better argue, Painting is not at all offensive in itself, because not at all here expressed, where some think God purposely and particularly quarrels with all Things that were offensive in feminine Curiosity: This of Complexioning being then not mentioned, because it may be used by many, as an Help of Infirmary, without any Pride or Vanity. But we will not make an Advantage of God's Silence in this Particular, but rather answer with more Certainty, that God in this Place enumerates all those Particulars, not as absolutely finding Fault with, or forbidding the Use of them, but as reproaching the ungrateful Pride and Abuse of them, in those to whom he had indulged so many Superfluities: Therefore, the Lord, to prevent any Mistake, first gives the Account of his Displeasure, Verse 16. *Because the Daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth Necks, and wanton Eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a Tinkling with their Feet:* Therefore it is, for their Haughtiness and abusing of God's Bounty in Nature and Art, he threatens to punish them, by depriving them of these Things, as he doth otherwise of his *Corn, Wine, Wool, Flax*, *Hos. ii. 9.* which the divine Indulgence had afforded, not to pamper wanton and proud Minds, to rebel against God, but
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to serve either natural Necessities, or civil Conveniences, or ingenuous Delights, or modest Decencies, or honourable State, as befitted Mankind in their sociable, orderly, and religious Living, to their own Content, to others Benefit, and to the Creator's Glory. If all Things are therefore vain, sinful, and unlawful, which vain and wicked Minds have or do abuse, What, we pray, will there be left for virtuous and sober Persons to use or enjoy? They must neither eat, nor drink, nor clothe, nor dress themselves to any Decency, Sweetness, Costliness, or Delight. We may as well forbid the Use of a Staff or Signet to honest Men; because *Judah*, in his blind and extravagant Desires, pawns them as Pledges of his Love to a Woman, whom he took and us'd as an Harlot, not common, but incestuous.

As for the Fathers of the Church speaking against Women painting themselves, we yet know they were so holy and humble Men, as not to think themselves infallible, nor to obtrude their Opinions, as Dictates; or their Commentaries for sacred Texts, and their Writings for indisputable Oracles, upon the Church of God, or any Believer's Conscience. Who is there in these Days of so observant a Respect to the Fathers, to forbear as Sin, as they forbad, or to perform as Duty, all they then requir'd? We have heard, and read, that every one of them and their Errors, greater or lesser, even in Points of greater Concern, than this of Ladies Beauties; that most of them were Antagonists in some Point or other, against some other of like Piety and Learning with themselves. Good and great Men are not set beyond Mistakes; nor is it seldom that Passion, or Prejudice, or Custom, byasses their Judgment wide of Truth. But saving the merited Honour
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and Respect we bear to those holy Men, What wise man now urges all the primitive Rigours of Discipline; yea, or all the Tenets of Doctrine which the Fathers sometime imposed upon *Christians*, as their several Judgments? No doubt, but the Fathers of the Church, after the Severity of those Times, was most, what in or very near to the Furnace of Persecution, did worthily study the extern Honour and Gravity of it, so as to decry all these Costlinesses, Delicacies, and Softnesses, bestow'd on Clothes, or Houses, or Bodies, or Heads and Faces (which must daily prepare to marry with the Flames and Faggots) as superfluous and less seasonable, and so no way suitable to that *Christian* Simplicity, Mortification, Modesty, and Humility, which gave daily Summons to Mortifiedness, by the sad and frequent Alarms of others Sufferings, and their own being expos'd to like Hazards of Death or Persecution; so this of auxiliary Beauty (among other Things) they might possibly then decry and deny with some Vehemency to *Christian* Women, not as absolutely evil, and in itself unlawful at all Times, but as unexpedient and needless at those Times; when (as precise Virgins) they had more need prepare the Lamps of their Heart for *Christ*, than the Beauty of their Looks and Faces for their Suitors or Husbands. Besides, the greatest Stricknesses of those holy Fathers seem to have been to Votaries or resolved Virgins, in whom they thought it a kind of Apostacy to return to those secular Toys and Curiosities of extern Ornaments, and Study of worldly Beauty, when they made a Profession to abandon them, and to live far above them, as studious, not to please Men, but God.

Q. May a Man be lawfully convicted upon the Evidence of but one Witness?

A. A

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A. A Judge once condemn'd a Woman in *Sarum*, for killing her Husband, on the Testimony of one Witness; afterwards the Deceased's Man confessed the Murther, when she was executed; whereupon the Judge being touch'd in Conscience for the Judgment, was used to say, *Quòd nunquam de hoc facto animam in vita sua purgaret.* Again, Sir *Walter Rawleigh*, in the Reign of King *James I.* had harder Measure, in being convicted, condemn'd, and executed without one Witness. But their hard Fate was against the Scripture, which says, *At the Mouth of two Witnesses, or three Witnesses, shall he that is worthy of Death, be put to Death: But at the Mouth of one Witness, he shall not be put to Death, Deut. xvii. 6. One Witness shall not rise up against a Man for any Iniquity, or for any Sin, in any Sin that he sinneth: At the Mouth of two Witnesses, or at the Mouth of three Witnesses, shall the Matter be established, Deut. xix. 15. Moreover, Christ requires two or three Witnesses, Mat. xviii. 16. And St. Paul says, That in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses shall every Word be established, 2 Cor. xiii. 1. And, Lastly, Two Witnesses, let Lawyers act how they please sometimes, are positively requir'd, not only by the Canon and Civil Laws, but also by the Municipal and Statute Laws of this Kingdom.*

F I N I S.

N. B. All Persons that shall propose Questions to the Gentlemen of the Society of the *Delphick Oracle*, may send them to *J. ROBERTS* in *Warwick-Lane*, where Letters will be taken in, but not without Post paid.